



THE DR. INCREASE MATHEWS HOUSE
Home of
PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
of Muskingum County Chartered 1890

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By
Norris F. Schneider

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Dr. Increase Mathews

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THE DR. INCREASE MATHEWS HOUSE

Dr. Increase Mathews recorded with a quill pen a list of expenses for construction of his stone cottage in 1805. Eighty years later his granddaughter added two stories to the home. It is fortunate that the builder of the house bequeathed by Mrs. F. F. Frazier to the Pioneer and Historical Society realized that he was making history and that he penned a record of his home and family.

These records include a diary kept by Dr. Mathews on an exploratory trip from Massachusetts to Ohio in 1798. His great grandson, Willis A. Bailey, edited this diary and it was published in the "New England Historical and Genealogical Register" in 1932. Bailey had copies printed in booklet form.

Mathews also wrote by candle light a list of articles sold in his hewed log store. On the last page of his day book he listed the "Expense of Stone House," now the oldest house in Zanesville and home of the Pioneer Society.

The descendants of Dr. Mathews inherited his sense of history. They handed the day book down from generation to generation. When his great grandson, Graham Bailey, sold the family drug business in 1943, he found the Mathews day book in a dark corner of the safe and presented it to the Pioneer Society.

This day book and Zanesville records provide a fairly complete account of Mathews after he came to Ohio. But we know little about the first twenty-eight years of his life. He was born on December 22, 1772, at New Braintree, Massachusetts. His father was Daniel Mathews, Jr., a descendant in the third generation of John Mathews, who, according to family tradition, was a native of France.

Huldah Putnam was the mother of Increase Mathews. She was a sister of General Rufus Putnam, Revolutionary War veteran and leader of the forty-eight pioneers who made the first legal settlement in Ohio at Marietta in 1788.



A large portico protected the main entrance to the Mathews House in the 19th century.

Increase was the ninth of ten children born to Daniel and Huldah Mathews. He enjoyed telling his grandchildren of his earliest recollection, the excitement of adults, the joyous clanging of bells and the firing of muskets to celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Young Increase probably learned his three R's at a country school. His father taught him how to plant, plow and husk corn. He found time to learn to play the cello.

One of his father's brothers was a physician. Perhaps that example encouraged Increase to study medicine with Dr. Field of Oakham, Massachusetts. He read Dr. Field's medical books and rode with his mentor in a buggy to make calls on patients. In a few years he had mastered the limited medical knowledge of his day. Where would he practice?

New England did not offer much opportunity. A depression had followed the Revolutionary War. People looked to the West as the land of opportunity. Letters from his Uncle Rufus Putnam praised the rich soil of the Muskingum Valley. John Mathews, brother of Increase, was a surveyer at Marietta. He also wrote home about the opportunities in the Ohio country.

Increase Mathews decided to have a look at this western land. On June 4, 1798, he started on horseback from Oakham for Marietta. In his diary he methodically recorded the number of miles he traveled each day and described the land and the tavern accommodations.

After crossing Sideling Hill he stopped at a small tavern that housed thirty-six people. At Somerset two days later he slept three in a bed in a log tavern. On July 13 he arrived at Wheeling and took a mail boat down the Ohio River. The boat floated downward all night.

His brother John met him at Marietta. Together they walked up to the home of their Uncle Rufus Putnam for breakfast. That home, enclosed in a glass and brick building, was the original section of Campus Martius Museum.

Increase spent the night with his Uncle Rufus. Then he started to visit relatives and inspect the land. At Belpre he visited his sister, Mrs. Jonathan Stone. From there he continued down the Ohio River to Gallipolis where his brother-in-law Stone was surveying. Later he came up the Muskingum and explored the land near Beverly.

He did not keep his eyes on the land at all times. With Edward Tupper he visited Mr. and Mrs. Harman Blennerhassett on their island in the Ohio River below Belpre. These Irish aristocrats had not yet become entangled in the web of Aaron Burr's alleged conspiracy.

Mathews wrote in his diary: "Miss Sally London is at the island on a visit. She is on the whole an amiable girl and possessed of many of those qualities which make a good companion. She is kind, obliging, ever in good spirits and free from affectation."

She almost made Increase forget his interest in the land. At no place on his visit to the Ohio country was he inspired to write in his diary such complimentary effusions about the rich soil. But he escaped her charms and after a month and a half returned home.

On April 25, 1799, about eight months after his return, he married Abigail Willis at her father's home in Oakham. Their first child, Melissa, was born at New Braintree on January 27, 1800.

Increase decided to seek his fortune on the Muskingum. In the autumn of 1800, when Melissa was not a year old, the family braved steep mountains, dense woods and narrow bridle paths to come to Marietta. They spent the winter and early spring with relatives there.

Early in 1801 Increase Mathews came with his wife and child and his brother John to Zanesville. Dr. Mathews was the first physician in the settlement. The few residents of the town at that early date were robust and healthy, and there was not enough sickness for the full time practice of medicine.

With Yankee ingenuity the Mathews brothers, a physician and a surveyor, opened the first store in Zanesville at the northwest corner of Third and Main streets. They sold drygoods, groceries, hardware, liquor, clothing and drugs.

Elijah Hart Church had the day book of the Mathews store open before him when he wrote an article for the "Courier" in 1888. Prices were in pounds, shillings and pence because English money was still in circulation. Church converted the prices to dollars and cents.

John McIntire, founder of Zanesville, paid 31 cents for a pound of shot. A pound of gun powder cost William Gardner 65 cents. David Harvey reached deep in the pockets of his jeans for \$2.25 to pay for two gallons of whiskey.

It must be remembered that all the merchandise Mathews sold was slowly and laboriously hauled over the mountains by pack horse to Wheeling. There it was loaded on flatboats, floated to Marietta and poled up the Muskingum.

Other sales recorded in the Mathews day book in 1801 were as follows: corn meal, 73 cents a bushel; paper of pins, 37 cents; pound of imported sugar, 25 cents; gingham, \$1.58 per yard; muslin, 79 to 85 cents per yard; tobacco, 25 to 37½ cents per pound; and one bandana handkerchief, \$1.12½.

Cash was scarce on the frontier. The pioneer settlers led a hand-to-mouth existence. If they raised more than they could eat, there was no market for their surplus produce. Business was conducted by barter.

Dr. Mathews accepted furs in exchange for merchandise. He allowed 37½ cents for a doe skin, 50 cents for a deer skin and 30 cents for a coon skin at his Zanesville store.

That store at Third and Main streets, however, was only a stop-gap affair. Dr. Mathews knew that there was more money to be made in selling land than in weighing tobacco or measuring whiskey.

One sunny June morning in 1801 Dr. Mathews packed some clean shirts in his saddle bag and said good bye to his wife. Then he climbed into the saddle and headed his horse over the ridges, past Captain Chandler's salt well, toward Marietta. After jogging through the woods for several hours, he saw another rider. It was his neighbor John McIntire.

The two men rode on side by side. They agreed that some good stands of oak bordered the path. They allowed as how the corn in a few clearings looked as if it would be knee high by the Fourth of July. But both were mum about their errand.

They intended to sleep at Callant's inn on Meigs Creek. But they failed to reach that place at dark and they camped in the woods for the night. The next day when they clattered down the dusty road into Marietta, Dr. Mathews turned off to the home of his uncle, General Rufus Putnam, and McIntire rode on down street to an inn.

That night General Putnam gave some fatherly advice to two nephews, Dr. Mathews and Levi Whipple, a millwright then a resident of Marietta. General Putnam was Surveyor General of the United States. He knew that next morning a tract of land on the west side of the Muskingum River from Zanesville would be sold at auction.

Putnam said to his nephews: "You boys ought to buy that land, and if necessary I'll help you make the first payment."

At the auction next morning the purpose of John McIntire's long horseback ride was revealed. He bid \$4 an acre for the tract. Putnam and his nephews held a whispered conference and bid \$4.25 an acre. They became the owners of the tract.

If McIntire had been the successful bidder, he could have added lots on the west side of the river to his Zanesville plat. Dr. Mathews and his partners, however, established a competitive town. For seventy years the towns were bitter rivals. Was that rivalry a help or a hindrance to progress? It is probable that the New Englanders in Putnam promoted progress.

The new owners lost no time in laying out lots. They found a spring at the foot of the hill facing the Muskingum River. That suggested the name Spring Hill for the elevation and Springfield for the town. They recorded the plat at Marietta on July 27, 1801.

On the same day they organized the Springhill Company. This firm sold lots to settlers. The partners made a contract on December 9, 1801, with John Sharp to construct a mill. The planks were whipsawed from timber cut on the town lots. A wing dam on the second falls of the Muskingum River swung the current to an undershot wheel that operated both a saw and a run of mill stones for grinding meal and flour.

Two squatters were living in cabins on the plat of Springfield and cultivating corn fields there. Dr. Mathews permitted

David Stokely to live in his cabin on the hill west of Pierce Street long enough to pay for clearing the ground. He paid the other squatter in cash for his labor.

Early in the spring of 1802 Dr. Mathews began construction of a two-story hewed-log "store house" on the lot east of the Pioneer Society property. Stone for the cellar walls came from Dr. Mathews' quarry north of the Zanesville Stoneware plant. His itemized list of expenses includes logs and joists, \$28.00; clinking and plastering, \$15.00; 4½ gallons whiskey for raising, \$4.50. Total cost was \$249.79.

The first floor served as a doctor's office and store. The Mathews family lived upstairs. On June 24, 1802, Mathews wrote: "Abigail, my dear and faithful wife departed this life at 7 o'clock in the morning, just two weeks after the birth of her child (Abigail)." She was buried in the first wood coffin in Zanesville on the hill south of Pershing Road. Later her body was moved to Mathews circle in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Dr. Mathews was left, "far from all connections or friends," he wrote, with two infant daughters. On March 23, 1803, he married Betsy Leavens at the home of Major Joseph Lincoln in Marietta. Four sons and four daughters were born to them.

The second floor of the hewed-log "store house" was only a temporary residence. Dr. Mathews was prospering from his medical practice and the sale of lots. In 1805 he completed a one-story stone cottage at 304 Woodlawn Avenue. He recorded an itemized list of expenses for construction of this home in the day book. The total cost was \$882.80.

Of the three proprietors of Springfield, as Putnam was then called, Dr. Mathews was most closely associated with the town and most prominently mentioned in history. It is appropriate, therefore, that his home, enlarged by his descendants, has been inherited and preserved by the Pioneer Society.

General Putnam was an absentee partner. He visited Muskingum County once in 1805 to attend a meeting of Lodge of Amity No. 5, F. and A.M.

Levi Whipple, the third proprietor, moved to Springfield in 1803 and built a cabin on Muskingum Avenue. Later he built a brick home on the same lot. He was one of the organizers of Lodge of Amity and the First Presbyterian Church in Putnam. As donor of land for the Methodist and Presbyterian churches and the Moxahala Avenue cemetery, he was the greatest benefactor of the three founders. He moved to Marietta a few years before his death in 1845.

Expense of Stone House

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 134 Days work of David Lewis @ 25 | 167 50 |
| 120 " of hands to tend @ 50 | 60 00 |
| Boarding for Lewis & tenders | 63 00 |
| Crutcher's bill for hauling | 45 50 |
| Expense of quarrying suppose | 70 00 |
| Digging Cellar | 15 00 |
| 236 Bushels Lime | 19 34 |
| — Lime burnt in log heap | 3 00 |
| Flowing & framing Sillings suppose | 20 00 |
| Flowing & framing Joists & rafters | 38 00 |
| 3568 Shingles @ 4 1/4 per 100 | 23 79 |
| Vickers & Co. bill of work | 158 02 |
| Scaffold boards | 5 00 |
| 5000 Feet Boards @ 11 1/2 c | 56 25 |
| Scantling for window frames | 2 50 |
| 1200 Feet Lath @ 50 | 6 00 |
| 90 th Nails @ 22 | 19 80 |
| 186 light window glass | 18 60 |
| Whiting & oil | 4 00 |
| Charlton stain | 18 00 |
| 9 pair butts | 3 00 |
| Iron for butts & windows & | 2 50 |
| Latches | 2 00 |
| Spiggs | 1 00 |
| | <u>822 30</u> |
| 6500 Brick @ 50 | 32 50 |
| Building Chimney | 28 00 |
| | <u>882 80</u> |

Dr. Mathews recorded this itemized cost of the construction of his house in his daybook.

Dr. Mathews continued to practice medicine for a few years after he completed his stone house. He charged fifty cents a visit for his services. When smallpox broke out in 1809, he vaccinated himself and his family. To overcome prejudice against vaccination he took his daughters Abigail and Sarah to the bedside of a patient ill with the disease. When they did not contract the disease, people were convinced of the benefit of vaccination.

Other physicians had arrived in the settlement about this time. Dr. Mathews gave up the practice of medicine and devoted much of his time to agriculture. He also managed his extensive real estate interests.

For the convenience of their settlers, Dr. Mathews, Levi Whipple and others secured a franchise from the legislature in 1812 to build a bridge across the Muskingum River to Zanesville. It was completed in 1813 from the foot of Third Street in Zanesville to the east end of the Dug Road.

As more settlers bought lots and built homes, they wanted a post office. When they sent in their application, they learned that a post office had already been established in an Ohio town called Springfield.

On January 20, 1814, the legislature passed an act changing the name of the town to Putnam in honor of General Rufus Putnam, one of the original proprietors.

Dr. Mathews reared his children in the stone house and gave them every advantage he could afford. One evidence of his provision for them was his construction of the stone house with the Greek portico across Woodlawn Avenue from his own home for his son Henry and wife, Margaret Dillon Mathews.

They had four children. Margaret died in 1842 and Henry in 1851. Their children were brought up in their grandfather's house across the street. Margaret, the youngest child, married Robert Fulton and they added the upper stories to the Mathews house.

Dr. Increase Mathews lived in his stone cottage for half a century. He built the home at Washington Street and Woodlawn Avenue in 1805 when he had only a few dozen neighbors. At his death in 1856 the population of Putnam was 1,500.

Dr. Mathews spent the twilight years of his life in peace and prosperity. His wife lived until 1852. Mathews made his will on February 1, 1853, and he died on June 6, 1856, in his eighty-fourth year.



Photograph of Mathews House in 1910 shows portico and brick walk from house to Woodlawn Avenue.



The Mathews House has been restored and landscaped to improve its appearance.

To his daughters Sarah and Susan he gave "all my books, pamphlets and household furniture." He divided his real and personal estate into nine equal shares, one share going to each of the following: Abigail W. Bailey, Sarah Mathews, Susan Mathews, Alfred Mathews, Charles Mathews, Mary Sturges and Edward Mathews.

The eighth share went to Alfred Mathews and Leonard P. Bailey in trust for the children of Melissa Belknap. The ninth share was willed to Sarah and Susan Mathews in trust for the children of Henry Mathews.

Miss Sarah Mathews occupied the house until her death in 1880. Then it came into possession of a daughter of Henry Mathews, Mrs. Robert Fulton. Fulton was manager of the Zanesville Woolen Mills on the bank of the Muskingum River just south of the Putnam end of the old covered Third Street bridge.

In 1884 the Fultons enlarged the house by the addition of two stories to the substantial ground floor walls of stone built by Mrs. Fulton's grandfather. Between the upright studs of

this addition, nogging was filled in for strength and insulation. This nogging consists of bricks laid on top of each other lengthwise to the wall. Shingles cover the brick.

Mrs. Fulton lived in the remodeled house for thirty-two years. Her husband retired and died. The woolen mill closed. The 1913 flood washed the old mill structure away and the flood water stood about ten feet deep in the old Mathews house.

Mrs. Fulton returned to her home after the flood. She had the floors scrubbed, repapered the walls, refinished the woodwork, dried out the walls and moved her living and dining room furniture down from the second floor.

Four years later her health failed. Her niece, Mrs. George K. Andrews, and her nephew, William Marriott Canby, a bond broker of Philadelphia, were at her bedside when she died in September, 1917. The same family had occupied the house for 112 years.

Ownership of the property continued in the family. In 1909 the Fultons had deeded the property to their nephews, William Marriot Canby and his brother Henry Canby of Wilmington, Delaware.

Local people understood that the Canby brothers had assumed the responsibility for maintaining the house. But they did not spend any money on it. They engaged W. E. Helmick to rent the property for a period of twenty years.

The condition of the home deteriorated rapidly. The last tenant operated a rooming house. When it could no longer be rented, the windows and doors were boarded up about 1930.

That did not stop vandals. They ripped the cherry wainscoating from the walls, tore up the floors to remove the gas pipe and broke the glass in the windows. Nothing was sacred to the pilfering vandals who helped themselves to all moveable parts.

During that period the owners tried to sell the property to the Pioneer Society. The members could offer \$6,500, but the owners demanded \$10,000 and the Society did not become the owner at that time. Later the price dropped. It is rumored that when Mr. William Adams bought the property in 1937 he paid \$2,700 for it.

Adams, a contractor, saved the house from complete disintegration. He cleaned the sandstone on the exterior and scraped the old mortar from between the stones and pointed them.

While restoring the interior, Adams saw that the girders

were fastened with wood pins, the window frames were pegged and square nails were used in the woodwork. The lath is hand-hewn. The doors were found to be half cherry and half walnut.

A workman who knew about the addition of the upper stories told Adams that the shingles which cover the brick sides were boiled in linseed oil before they were applied. Only four shingles had to be replaced.

At the left of the front hall was a music room. The Adamses removed the rear partition to enlarge the living room. They refinished the bay windows and the china cupboard.

When Adams completed the restoration, the Mathews house no longer had the appearance of a haunted place with bleak walls and gloomy rooms visible through broken windows. The historic home radiated a spirit of homelike cheerfulness and modern comforts along with a lingering atmosphere of pioneer days.

The Adams family lived in the house for a dozen years. There is a tradition that as Mrs. F. F. Frazier was driving through Putnam one day in 1949 her car stopped in front of 304 Woodlawn Avenue. She looked up and said, "This is where I want to live." She bought the house and lived there until her death.

She was a granddaughter of George Guthrie, a prominent pioneer who built the house at 521 Woodlawn Avenue in Greek Revival style with two-story fluted columns.

Mrs. Frazier's name was included among the members of the last graduating class of the Putnam Seminary in 1902. Her mother was a sister of Peter Black at whose home on Market Street she was a frequent visitor. Dorothea Guthrie was married in 1916 to F. F. Frazier, who died in 1941.

Mrs. Frazier was a faithful member of the Pioneer and Historical Society. For many years that Society occupied a room in the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building on North Fifth Street. When that building was razed in 1937, E. M. Ayers was president. He bought the Bailey home at Maple and Adair avenues as a home for the Society collection. The Art Institute occupied the first and part of the second floor.

Knowing that Mrs. N. S. Chandler had made a will bequeathing her home to the Society, Mr. Ayers told her he was giving the Society a home and asked her for a substantial contribution to an endowment fund for the former Bailey home. Instead she chose to will her property to the Abbot Home.



Symmetrical early American flower garden was planted on the north side of the Mathews House in 1974.

From 1937 to 1970 the Art Institute expanded and the space available to the Pioneer Society was reduced. It was impossible to accept gifts or add to the historical collection.

Mrs. Frazier died on February 7, 1970. The newspaper report of her will revealed the fact that she had bequeathed her home to the Pioneer and Historical Society of Muskingum County.

At a meeting of the Society on May 20, 1970 the members voted to accept the house. It was decided to conduct a vigorous membership campaign to secure more funds for maintenance of the new home. The possessions of the Society

were moved from the Art Institute to the Mathews-Fulton-Frazier house.

On Sunday, November 22, 1970, the members were invited to an open house. About five hundred people viewed the relics owned by the Society in new and more spacious arrangements and inspected the house, the oldest building standing in Muskingum County and former home of the founder of Putnam.

In 1974 the director, Mr. Kenneth Gale, designed and planted a symmetrical early American flower garden on the Washington Street side of the lot. He also negotiated with the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monumental Association for installing military memorial exhibits in honor of Zanesville and Muskingum County veterans of all wars to be completed by July 4, 1976. Community observance of the Bicentennial will be perpetuated by this project of the Monumental Association.

The Pioneer and Historical Society of Muskingum County was incorporated on March 4, 1890. It was the outgrowth of earlier groups called the Muskingum County Pioneer Association and the Old Settlers Association. The Old Settlers did not live to see their dreams come true a century after they organized. But if they could see the Pioneer Society museum today, they would agree that it was worth waiting for.